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ABSTRACT

Laney's Success Model for First-Year Students attempts to increase retention by accommodating students and encouraging learning. It requires an institutional commitment for student academic success and tries to dispel the forces of attrition: academic boredom, difficulty adjusting to college life, and academic underpreparedness. The first-year seminar program aids student success by monitoring students for one year and providing opportunities for intervention when needed. Credited seminars, regarding such topics as student transportation, should be taught by trained faculty, and school orientation should be lengthened. Orientation and seminars both can help to ease students into the college life. To further advocate student transition and academic success, teachers' plans should include such items as learning students' names, offering specific office hours, using collaborative learning, encouraging campus involvement, varying the instructional mode, setting short term assignments, including everyone in class discussions, and making instruction animated and upbeat. Mentoring and seminar evaluations are also integral to student success and retention. Contains 19 references. Appendix includes support materials. (YKH)

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LANEY'S SUCCESS MODEL FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

By

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CAMPUS WIDE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS: LANEY'S SUCCESS MODEL FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

At the outset we need to be clear about one fact regarding campus wide programs of any stripe and for retention success programs particularly. These programs require a belief system centering on the idea that students can learn and that this institution can help them do just that by transforming itself into an institution which is totally *STUDENT SERVING.* These programs also require vision, imagination, and a commitment from the campus leadership. That is, if they are to be successful. This commitment demands its time, support, money, facilities and staff. With this commitment in place, the research indicates that almost any program of the student success model kind will work to serve all students well, be they:

ORIENTATIONS
DEVELOPMENTAL ADVISING
ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE
MENTORING
COUNSELING
WELLNESS CENTERS
TUTORING

The program that I am going to describe and propose in this paper I call a **FIRST YEAR SEMINAR** approach to student retention. While all of the programs and interventions exemplified in institutions across the country offer some positive features which serve to enhance student success, I believe that the **FIRST YEAR SEMINAR** offers the best answer to student success in that it

is a semester, or year long, program which follows students during that time period. By monitoring students thusly, interventions for their retention can be undertaken as the need for that intervention is observed. Issues in their lives can thus be addressed before the students disappear, dropout. And that is after all the purpose of intervention programs, to halt student dropouts. This is also the reason that since the mid-1970s, of the various programs that have popped up on campuses have expanded so rapidly across the country remains that these programs have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate their effectiveness. The good news for those who are starting these kinds of programs as our **FIRST YEAR SEMINAR** is, the research shows that such student success models have a ripple effect that washes across campuses to strengthen the vitality of the entire institution. Inertia bound staff which has been waiting to retire or die, (whichever comes first) have been know to become animated and even excited about their work when these kinds of programs are started and supported by the educational leadership.

Since this is not a doctoral dissertation, I shall not bore you with the historical context from which my little model emanates. Suffice it to say that there exists a long, varied and distinguished history of term long faculty advising going back to the "Don" system of European universities of the middle ages leading to the present via Harvard's(2) recognition of the need

for this kind of longitudinal support of students achievement codified in their plans as early as 1889. So that if we need an historical contest to gain support for our plan, that context is rich. Some of these institutions offer "for credit" courses of one or two units. I am not proposing any thing as formal as that. I believe that a more informal but highly organized approach will serve our students better than those models, even though, some of those programs work just fine. There is not just one answer here. There are lots of good answers and it is up to each institution to determine its own needs and to carve out its own best solutions to that felt need, devise a plan, such as mine here, and go to work. The need is great and the rewards are many.

My little proposal is designed to dispel the forces of attrition which include:

A. ACADEMIC BOREDOM

I believe that student boredom is the direct result of the culture from which our students emerge. Modern students are surrounded by entertainment of the most absurdly passive kinds possible. It is called TELEVISION! We are competing with it and we need to be aware of that fact and organize so that we do not lose that battle. Students who appear without clear goals are also subject to be bored and attrit quickly. What are we to do about student tendencies toward boredom? Shall we learn to sing and dance? I think not. What we must do gain and maintain student interest levels is to make instruction more entertaining, interesting. This idea will be explored in more detail in the portion of this little treatise called ***"CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES"***... which appear in a later section of this discussion. The literature shows that there is a high correlation between students' rating of teachers' and their instruction modes and the amount of student learning. For our students' success sake, we need to tap into that.

B. IRRELEVANCE

Modern students are highly susceptible to feelings of irrelevance. Self-esteem seems to be in short supply in this period of our history and the ability to project themselves into the future where students are successful and feel good about themselves is rare. As a result of this phenomenon, students increasingly feel themselves to be irrelevant and for little reason at all they disappear and early on in their college experience. I have found that among well prepared students that feeling good about themselves is unusual. Since this seems to be a fact that is undeniable by our experience too, we need to make instruction relative to student interest. This is work, but it can be achieved. How, teach teachers to make their subject matter include some aspect of interests that students have. That's right, teachers will have to actually talk with students about what their interests are and accommodate those interest in some small way in their course work topics and assignments thus mitigating our dropout.

C. UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Often students feel that college will change their lives instantly and with little expenditure of effort from them to achieve that change. Surprise! That is not the reality of college, even community colleges. Students are not stupid. When they realize that their reality is not the reality of the college community, they disappear. Institutions which evaluate student needs and implement early counseling will serve us in stemming the waves of student dropout.

D. DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Upon entering the college community, students often find that the support systems that they built for themselves in previous educational environments may be gone or at least no longer appropriate in ways that they understand. Students find that they have to rebuild those systems and for a good number, that is a daunting task that they acquiesce in the face of and give up rather than rebuild. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1986 study showed that ignorance of ways to play the "school game" hinders student transitions too. That study showed that only 34 percent of new students knew that they could turn to professors for personal advice and help. Transition slippage can be controlled through institutions pursuing strong student information about the college program which is repeated and underscored for each first year students. Of course, this can be done in large groups but it is ideally don best in small groups. This will require lots of staff people and to get those people in place, almost all of the college personnel can be utilized. That is, anyone who knows the college can help,

including some "non-traditional resources" here. Secretaries, middle managers and the like can be trained to serve students in this much needed force field for the prevention of the dropout. Remember that this attack upon the dropout must be in place early in the first year students' college experience: within the first few days of hitting campus, or they dropout.

E. INDECISION REGARDING A MAJOR AND/OR A CAREER CHOICE

Students who do not know where they are going are easily lead away from the educational institution, hence their dropout. Even higher-ability students are at risk when they suffer this malady, indecision. A 1994 American College Testing Program survey found that students with higher than average grade point averages are adversely affected by indecision or tentativeness of career choice. Obviously, we need to help students make choices early on in their college encounter. Again, the counseling resources of the college are going to be heavily engaged. This is a problem that is soluble: use "non-traditional" staff and bring in and train other interested volunteers to halt our dropout.

F. UNDERPREPAREDNESS ACADEMICALLY

We all know that academic underpreparedness manifests itself in frustration and feelings of failure, isolation, rejection and other "gut level" negatives that destroy hope and kills ambition. All of the factors that educators are more than familiar with operate here to negatively impact our students:

a. poor reading skill
b. inappropriate course placement
c. unused academic support services
d. low self-esteem
e. poor study skills and habits

All this leads to the dropout. How does the college stop that? Preparedness articulation with high schools, early, i.e. fifth and sixth grade elementary school visit by college staff who tell students about the college. This ought to be an ongoing program so that by the time that students actually arrive at our door they have been exposed to elements of the college so that there is transition shock removal already in place. The message of the program need to be "GET PREPARED." Let us be specific in our message to students here. Learn to read! Learn to write! Learn as much general information as you can! Learn vocabulary! Learn about occupations! Learn to study! Learn to listen! Learn to think! Should students do these things, there will be for us no problem of dropout.

G. DISSONATE INCOMPATIBILITY

There is such a thing as a mismatch between the individual student and the institution. Early intervention and placement in

or direction to the appropriate institution helps to prevent frustration driven dropouts here. Counselors shall factor in at this point at a very high level. We may need to call in to service those who are retired and freshly trained to serve our students at this point. Every semi-skilled student does not need to go to college and other further educational resources and alternatives need to be investigated explored and, in many cases, engaged to foster success for that student who might find at our institution "a disconnect," an incompatibility, for whatever reason, thereby avoiding another fresh dropout.

DEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS

What is first year student success at the community college level? I believe it is something more than just merely earning enough credits or units to graduate with an A.A. degree. I subscribe to a much broader definition than that. To me, first year student success is characterized by their developing academic and intellectual competence in the context of a fully developed and clear identity as a human being. Developing clear career and life-style choices, maintaining personal health and wellness, developing an integrated philosophy of life, and establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships are all major aspects of and measures of first year students success. Success is then not a monolith for first year students. It is a complex and involved matrix of issues, ideas and emotions that weighed together make up that mystical entity, first year student success. And since this is the case, the responsibility of the community college looms larger in the lives of first year students and our role in establishing and creating that success has become and remains a major challenge for our communities. We have a job to do which is all the more reason for this paper. We need to support students better in their pursuit of success and in so doing keep them from the evil dropout.

WHAT'S TO DO, YOU SAY!

Well, there is just a lot that we can do about our problem with dropout. We can start by changing our attitude about the work that we do and about the students that we **SERVE**. Our work is the last buffer between a chance at the ***AMERICAN DREAM*** or a chance to live under the *freeway on-ramp*. The community college is for most students their last chance at a better life. Talk with any ten students that you find on our illustrious maul. They will tell you that what I am suggesting is quite true for them. Yes, some understand this fact and the seriousness of it. They also understand the hazard associated with failing to take advantage of this opportunity. Our job is to make that opportunity work for all of our students. How do we do that? Well, here is the plan. Decide that we are wonderful and work from that premises by implementing the plan that I suggest in this small treatise.

This plan is three pronged and it, just like the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties, must needs be applied at all levels at once. Civil Rights critics used to ask, "What do you people want, education, housing, jobs, fairness in bank lending policies, equal access to public accommodations or freedom from harassment?" The answer is that we want it all and now! There is no "which one do you want!" The three aspects of my plan must be instituted simultaneously, if the plan is to be as effective as it can be.

Orientation

Student orientation programs are most effective when they are days long and supported by semester long reinforcement in that covey of orientation information. The Byrd studies show the longer the orientation program, up to a week in length, the better their success rates grows. It also showed that the most successful orientation programs are composed of many tiered and faceted approaches to student service utilizing such aspects as panels, workshops, educational and occupational testing, recreational activities, registration procedures, awareness building of college programs, introduction to college services, named college resources available to them, advising regarding their academic strengths, and/or demonstrated weaknesses, how to play the "school game" tips, study skill development, sharing thoughts and feelings in small groups which are lead by college familiar leaders, and campus tours.

A TYPICAL FOUR DAY ORIENTATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL

MONDAY

Program registration
Opening session with introductions of staff
Testing sessions
Feed them something
Workshops on "Getting to know you"

TUESDAY

Testing continued
Workshops on college survival skills
Subject area presentations
Campus tour
Admissions and records demands
Financial aid information workshop
Library resources workshop
Security information workshop
Vocational programs

WEDNESDAY

Workshops on college history traditions
Workshops on college success stories
Academic advising based on test results
Feedback workshops
Workshops on student expectations
Food services information workshop
Health services information workshop
Transportation concerns - BART -
Recreation activities

THURSDAY

"Best foot forward" shows, performances by college elite
Students life workshop
College publication information workshops
Athletic department workshop
Transfer articulations available
Review of orientation topics
Program evaluations by students
"Pep-talk" and program closing

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY OPEN CAMPUS

Self-paced First Year student campus tours.

You are asking, "Who will do the planning of these many activities." Well, it will take a great, active and strongly motivated committee of persons lead by a very willful coordinator to construct and present elements of this orientation program

well. (No, I am not looking for a job!) It can be done. Colleges are doing it. Laney can do it.

THE STUDENT SEMINAR, a rationale

In many colleges, student seminars are rather common place, but here, I find as I talk with colleagues, that this modem is a "totally new idea!" I think that it is one idea whose time has come. What obtains is not working and we need to try another idea. With that in mind, let me give yet another "PEP-TALK" and, at simultaneously present and overview/rationale for the student seminar model. The research shows that students who have a feeling of being connected to the college stay with the college. Conversely, students who feel alienated and detached from the college are inclined to dropout at the drop of a slight difficulty or misunderstanding or bit of confusion. Student seminars give students another reason for remaining at the college: seeing something that they are interested in or curious about, experiencing something new and exciting, (Yes, I believe that learning ought to be exciting as well as interesting!) something information filled and the like. What happens when students participate in students seminars? For on thing, they discover their hidden strengths that add to their self-esteem. For another, they learn about relationships that help to modify their behavior. And lastly, they learn that their intellectual and educational horizon can be "pushed back," thus increasing their will to know and curiosity about the world/universe. The operative word in this discussion is LEARN. What do we get from all of this? Well, we get more complete people in our society.

Can we use more of those? My enthusiasm about the student seminar approach to student attrition problems stems from the idea/belief, that learning can be exciting, even fun. I think that this educational experience can be fun for the instructors too. I am not talking "entertaining 'em" here, I am talking about stimulating and exhilarating students through instruction and their education. This is like religion, a believe system! I believe that students who are involved with and in their learning become better learners. I also believe that students learn best when they experience their education, the reason for sponsored exposure to new places and events. I do not know of a single teacher who wants his charges to be come mediocre learners. There is a reciprocal "pay off" flowing from the use of student seminars and that is a renewed energy and enthusiasm on the part of instructors. Some people who were waiting to either retire or die, which ever comes first, find themselves renewed in the educational process. So how do we begin this cycle? Well, decide that we want a change and have begun.

You are asking, "What will our student seminar look like? What shall we teach in it? Who will teach in it? How will be manage it? How shall we measure (read test) its success?" There is no one answer to these questions but there are lot of good answers. What will it look like? That question is answered in my presentation of the CALENDAR or some would call it a SYLLABI.

To entice students to come back to the campus and become bonded to it I offer a myriad of activities. Some of these activities are to be fond on campus and others are off campus but all are to be college sponsored.* (See the CALENDAR/SYLLABI.) (3)

What shall we teach in the seminar? We teach "enrichments" as Dr. Strang used to say. We teach ideas and subjects that our students ordinarily would not come across. Bay Area resource visits are a "god send" here because there is so much to choose from. Examples include:

Bay Model
Historical sites
Berkeley Headlands
Bay area parks and ecological reserves
Colleges and universities
San Francisco Yacht Club
Concerts and performances
Davies Symphony Hall tour
Fort Mason tour
San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum
Cartoon Museum
Jewish Museum of San Francisco
Athletic events
Ansel Adams Center
California Museum of Art
African American Museum and Library
Liberty ships
Haas-Lilienthal House
Lick Observatory
Lawrence Hall of Science
Morrison Planetarium
Strybing Arboretum
Coit Tower
Hearst Museum of Anthropology
Shows and exhibits
Lectures
Poetry readings
Special interest clubs
Walking Historical tours of all kinds
Library activities (Black History Month readings)
NCTE Read In Day celebration

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Physical Education events
Dance Department Spring Recital
College transfer days, articulations galore
San Francisco's Fleet Week
San Francisco's Annual Dog Show
San Francisco's Annual Cat Show
Berkeley's Annual Jazz Festival
Oakland Ballet
U.C Berkeley Pacific Film Archive

This is just a suggestion of items that could be explored. Put your mind to it and you can think of other things to add to this list. We also teach subjects that students need repeated exposure to, "How To" seminars and even safe sex seminars. Oh yes, this is not free. It will be some large job to prepare and coordinate this part of our plan but the impact upon students is powerful and years later students report that the most important day in their educational life came during a seminar sponsored trip, offering exposure or experience.(4)

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ADDRESSED

There will be a need for transportation to do this well. We may charter, rent, or purchase this transportation. Chartering might be the best way to go in the beginning. As the program progressed, other means of transport may be employed. Public transit is also one "way to go." Students have transportation of their own and are glad to car-pool and share rides. Use that resource in these sponsored trips to keep costs in check. Oh, are you thinking "field-trip?" Well, that is quite all right. They work!

WHO SHALL TEACH OUR SEMINARS?

Who shall teach our seminars? Any interested Laney teacher on staff will do just fine, once that person has had a bit of training in preparation for said seminars. Preparation of staff and volunteers here is the coordinator's responsibility. Any one person who has wide expertise in a subject matter may teach in our program. Experts in our community may teach in our program. This is not Pollyanna. This is optimism about the interest in the community that we shall find once Laney's program is under way. During the era of the Laney's world famous "Experimental College," our little college within a college was awash with said volunteers (Keep on reading) and I am sure that spirit of cooperation will obtain again, once we are up and moving. Experts are more than willing to help. Volunteerism it is called.

Of course, there is some money that will be needed here as well. When this commodity is loosened upon our little program, we are assured of its success because where the money is there is our commitment. That is as old as... and it has not changed not will it. How much money? How much of a finely refined program do we want? That decision will determine the cost of the program's funding level: big commitment, big "bucks," little commitment, few "bucks!" Let us brook no argument regarding the

"lack of funds." If we want it, we can pay for it, so let us not be "detoured from our chosen direction!"

CREDIT FOR SEMINAR ATTENDANCE AND USE

How shall we insure that students partake of the offerings? Make them interesting and this will not be a problem, but students being students there must needs be a method for monitoring their utilization of these offerings and so I would suggest a method that is time tested and that works. Let us say that to get a one unit credit for seminar participation, a student must attend twenty events during his first semester. We could devise a card with a number edge and have the card punched, torn off, or marked "present" in some way. We used this idea at the University of Kansas many years ago where students had to indicate that they had been exposed to program offerings by showing his card during finals at desks for checking the same which could be found all over the campus. The system worked and there developed among students a rather sharp competition to determine who could attend the most college sponsored functions and offerings. These experiences offered KU students the riches of exposure to new ideas and arts. The same may be said of our Laney students once they are engaged in our seminar offerings. Another chore for Admissions and Records, well, yes. But they are equal to the challenge, I am sure.

TEACHER INSERVICE: ***a given in this discussion.***

It goes without saying that before we can institute a really working system of student serving programs, Laney needs to reinvigorate the staff. This is no small issue in thinking about new ways to do our job of working with and for students here and now. Yes, new thinking and new ways of acting are required here, if success is even in the offing for this program that we are considering.

Inertia and, as we have noted elsewhere in some small detail, getting staff to move in new ways requires a genius of a leader who is himself committed to change. This person needs all of the skill and grace that is "out there." Once extant, that force of the leader's commitment will move staff to add its own touches to the program. It happens all of the time, once the thing is moving.

Inservice, what will be the subjects for presentation. Well, teacher motivation, teacher mental health, teacher creativity, teacher problem solving, teacher student relations, teacher classroom management, teacher questions (how to ask them), teacher goals, teacher security and safety constitute a few of the topics that needs be addressed herein. Teacher ideas for inservice workshops can also be solicited so that teachers feel that they are included in this process form the beginning, before the beginning. Some time and some money will be needed to start a working inservice program, but not a lot of either,

yet, creative juices of everyone ought to be tapped to tap our potential in this approach to becoming totally student serving. Do I hear, " Well, you had better hire a lot of new staff?" That may not be a bad idea! However, these changes that I am presenting here can easily be achieved by any interested and motivated staff, be it old and slow or young and energetic or anything in between. Inservice works just as oral tactile drill in basic instruction works!

Shall I say one more time that leadership is the hinge upon which this program's success swings.

SAMPLE ORIENTATION SYLLABI FOR FIRST YEAR SEMINARS

January 13	Introduction: Policies and procedures (The two day orientation discussed above)
January 14	"Avoiding the "Blue Meanies:" Academic Rules, Grades, Registration and Advisement"
January 15	Study skills and time management
January 16	Library skills
January 17	The College game: "What's here and how to get at it"
January 20	Learning how to learn: Academic skills revisited
January 21	Values Clarification: why am I hear: goals delineated in writing, please!
January 22	Understanding professors
January 23	Stress and money management (These could be separate topics.)
January 24	Coping with criticism
January 27	Assertiveness
January 28	Subject area student panels: lots, vocational and academic
January 29	Health and wellness open house: meet the nurse
February 1	Campus safety considerations and connections: "How to call for help"
February 2	Group building: Networking for success
February 3	"Improving your writing: get organized"
February 4	"Appreciating Individual Differences" (He ain't like me and it's OK!)
February 7	"I owe it all to Laney: Student success model panel"
February 8	Social: feed them something - The Macharana?
February 9	Laney sponsored activities "kick in:" Go, Do, Experience, Grow, Learn! (Get your card punched.)

A CLASSROOM TEACHER'S PLAN FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENT SUCCESS

Traditionally, the teacher works in the space of the classroom alone in the struggle to share information in ways that students will learn it. The key word here is ALONE. In the face of modern demands requiring a multi-cultural work force by the next century, it is paramount that the isolation of efforts not be limited to those of the teacher. This American culture needs a highly trained, skill and knowledgeable work force now and will need more of the same in the twenty-first century. It is going to be more and more the job of the community college to train that work force*, so the politicians tell us. As a result of this trend and demand, our institutions of higher learning must focus on new ways to serve the "at risk" (Read **FIRST YEAR.**) student and the not so "at risk" student in particular.

Should we find the formula that works for this student population, we will have found the formula that serves all students. The kinds of experiences that enrich "at risk" students are the kinds of experiences that serve all students.

The research shows that the ideal retention programs are those which are institutionally based, campus-wide, highly structured affairs. We wonder why there are not more successful programs modeling on more campuses. Is there a leadership vacuum? Whatever the cause of the paucity of programs, the solution will often fall on the individual teacher to address.

* Note the President Clinton's latest proposals on this matter.

If the problem is to be attacked and solved, teachers will do the attacking. As we have indicated earlier in this proposal, with strong imaginative leadership, many effective things can be done to greatly enhance student retention. If these things are not done by the classroom teacher, who will help students stay through our courses? Teachers constitute a major part of the answer and there are many reasons for that fact. The teacher is the closest to the problem. Secondly, it is easy for the teacher to start a specific program because he has the autonomy to try new things by virtue of the door on his classroom. When that door is closed, the teacher can try new techniques at will. Each teacher brings special qualities to the task. Energy, firmness, fairness, openness, warmth, charm, and the creativity that will be needed to make a retention program work. A willingness to take a chance on the part of the teacher helps here too. By studying the plan that I developed and presented herein for teachers exclusively each teacher will have a plan that will work with your students, and by deciding to implement that plan, any teacher can enhance retention of his "at risk" (and all) students, as he works alone. I repeat, with support, retention programs will work best, but even without that support, (even though we assume that we shall have that support) teachers can be very successful in keeping students in their classes. Teachers! adjust this plan to suit your subject matter needs and go to work. You will by so acting protect students form the phenomenon

called dropout.

My two brief last words focus upon these: populations served and philosophical basis for my proposal. The FIRST YEAR student of any stripe and of under-represented stripes particularly is served best with the same approaches to instruction and motivation that good teacher employs with any students. That is to say that students need good, considerate, validating, self-esteeming educational experiences repeatedly and often applied within the context of course work. Techniques which work for "at risk" under-represented students work for students , period. Therefore, as we have said before, with this "at risk" student population is served, all students populations are served.

The learning theory that I apply here comes right out of Educational Psychology 101. Simply stated, it suggests the idea that the success of students is a highly correlated and frequently replicated function of teachers' treatment and of students' perception of that treatment that they receive from the educators whom they encounter during their education lives. If we want students to do well, we professionals need simply to treat them with respect and well.

No magic is required! After all, we learn what we experience. Let this little PEP TALK serve to encourage each teacher to try my plan and go to work with a new attitude!

THE EXPLANATION OF TECHNIQUES

1. LEARN THEIR NAMES.

Learn their names. This might seem obvious to an experienced teacher, but it needs to be said again. Learn names and call students by their name when referring to them, especially when referring to Black male students. If you can memorize their names on the first day, that is a good idea. But, learn names as quickly as you can. Issues of self-worth, specialness, and identity are addressed in a positive way by your utilizing this first technique.

2. ASSIGN SPECIFIC OFFICE HOUR VISITS

Assign specific office hour visits. These are to be completed during the first two weeks of school. I know that this will take a lot of your time during the first weeks, but the "pay off" is wonderful in its effect upon retention. These visits can be very informal, consisting of a simple discussion of where they went to high school and what plans that they might have for their future vocation. These visits might consist of issues that the students want to discuss and I always ask at the start of these visits a question which allows the student to bring up issues that concern him. The range of topics brought up during these visits have been broad and rich. I am frequently told information and facts that they would not tell their parents. These kinds of revelations unfold once one's trustworthiness is established. Health problems, drug problems, issues of abortion, financial problems, relationship problems, and considerations of suicide are just a very few of the issues that I have listened to during these office hour visits. From these discussions, I have learned that there are many factors weighing upon students that do affect their ability and willingness to complete courses. I have also found that when the problems are addressed, students who were contemplating dropping out will reconsider and make great efforts to finish the course work. These new found efforts prove what we, the teachers, have to believe. Students want to succeed and they also want to please. Given the chance, they will.

3. USE "CALLING CARDS"

Use "calling cards" which are 5" by 8" index cards folded to make a four-sided 4" by 5" index card. Write the name of a classmate on one "page" of the booklet and assign them to call each person listed at least twice per week. Most students will call one or two classmates and that is enough. The "networking" is established and class bonding begun. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are reduced mightily by the use of these cards. The time and date of each call are recorded by students and monitored by me weekly. Students using the cards "stick" and - the law of the Unexpected Consequence - do the best work. Use this technique. It works.

4. TOUCH EACH ONE OF YOUR STUDENTS

This technique might appear to be dangerous to some of us but it can be done in a number of ways. Ideally, this technique is applied unobtrusively. I do it by making a hand to hand contact as materials are passed out or by brushing or touching a hand or shoulder as I "work the room." The same technique can be applied in a very clear and overt way too. Shake hands with the students as they leave the classroom. This eliminates "charges for the door" at the end of class periods. Of course, shake hands when they come to your office for a visit. This technique is quintessentially the humanizing of the learning experience.

5. USE PEER TUTORS AND COUNSELORS

Use peer tutors and counselors because students will "hear" from peers what they cannot hear from you, the teacher. Choose former students who have achieved well or utilize the effective learner who is in the current group. With a little training, these students can be a wonderful resource for both the students and for you. Training consists of your making clear the material that you want peers to teach. Monitor this one for success here.

6. USE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FREQUENTLY

Use collaborative learning frequently. Collaborative learning is what we used to call "small group" learning. Use it. It works. I employ this technique when there is some in-class study effort needed. Students share questions and information in these small group sessions that foster their learning skill development. These groups provide a comfortable place for "at risk" students to explore ideas in a rather safe less exposed way than would occur in a discussion held by the entire class. Safety is the key here. Since so many of the students that we want to serve with our program are "at risk" students, this safety factor is important. The "at risk" student by definition is one who has been wounded by school experiences so that he needs lots of protected spaces to work on developing his skills and confidence. This technique provides that security. Places in the instructional plan where this technique can be used include reading, discussion, test preparation, and brain storming. These are just a few ideas for this technique's employment. You can think of a lot more instances where collaborative learning can be developed so that you may better serve your students.

7. USE FIVE MINUTE "GET ACQUAINTED" SESSIONS

Use five minute "GET ACQUAINTED" sessions at the beginning of each semester. Structure the five minutes by having the students ask each other specific questions about themselves. I use the following instructions.

a. Tell your name.

b. Tell one thing that you like about yourself.
c. Tell one thing that you would like to improve upon about yourself.

Use this five minute session for two weeks. Encourage inclusiveness by having the students talk with students whom they do not know. This is "networking" at another level from the "Calling Card" and this reinforces the concept of making connections with fellow students, reducing feelings of isolation. The reduction of feelings of isolation is a major one for this program and needs attacking on as many levels as possible.

8. ENCOURAGE CLUB AND CAMPUS ACTIVITY JOINING.

Encourage club and campus activity joining. Research on student retention shows that the pertinacious student is the student who has some connection with out of class activities. That student is more likely to finish course work than those "parking lot-classroom-parking lot" students, for which the junior colleges are famous. Commute institutions have a particularly difficult time holding students. The reason for this is that students who are without connections lack reasons for "sticking around" when there are problems or when there are difficulties of any kind. The way around that problem for the classroom teacher lies in the club or group activity that can be found on any campus if you look for them. Introduce your students to them. They will not know about most opportunities for such activity. You have to be their resource person. With a very small variety of choices, you can interest most students in at least one such activity. You may have to take the students to the meetings. If that is required, do it. School work becomes more of a balanced activity for students when they are involved with an extra-curricular activity. These "outside" interests show how school work is a part of the rest of the world and how students are a part of that world. I am still talking about reducing feelings of isolation and feelings of being far from those things which are important and pertinent to "at risk" students.

a. Swim Club
b. The Black Student Union
c. Drama Club
d. Photography Club
e. Dance groups
f. Volunteer groups
g. Music groups
h. Art groups
i. Sports groups

These are just a few of the kinds of activities that you can look for to help your students get connected to your campus. You can think of a lot more and better ones than I have listed here, I am sure. Remember, a connected student is a retained student.

9. **WALK THEM THROUGH THE CAMPUS.**

Walk them through the campus. With "at risk" students, make no assumptions about what they understand regarding your campus lay out. Take your students on a walking tour of the grounds, naming the buildings and features that you know that they need to be familiar with in order to function on your campus. Use a map, but be sure that your students know how to read a map. Teach them that skill on the first walk that you take. They will like that. After all, information is information. Be detailed in your descriptions of your campus and its special qualities and problems. Access for all students should be a part of this presentation. Special places for students to gather after class should be highlighted and emphasized. Unique aspects of your campus should be focused upon. Various unique services and facilities are the features that I focus on when I lead my tours each semester. You will find outstanding features on our campus too. Share these facilities with your students. When students discover that there is more to the campus and school than books and classes, they are given yet another reason for staying with your program. The more reasons that they can find for staying the better it is for student success.

10. **TAKE FIELDTRIPS.**

Take fieldtrips. Students report that the most memorable learning experience that they ever had that was school connected occurred on a fieldtrip. This is true at all levels. Take students on fieldtrips. They learn a lot and remember what they learn through that kind of experience. With our first year students, fieldtrips are especially useful since these students are less likely to have been exposed to the experiences offered by the fieldtrip. I have taken my junior college students to the zoo for years and each year there are students who had never been to our zoo, or any zoo. You will find the same lack of experiences a given in the lives of our encapsulated students. A broadly experienced student is a better prepared student. That student has more to think about, to talk about, and to write about. Give them better opportunities to think. Take them on fieldtrips.

11. **VARY INSTRUCTIONAL MODE.**

Vary the instructional mode by lecturing a little, very little. Use video. Make your own, if need be. Use collaborative learning techniques. Use short student presentations as a part of your instructional mode. Avoid classroom arrangements that have students looking at the back of each others' heads. Sit in circles so that students can see each other and you as well. Avoid sitting behind your desk. If you must sit, sit with the students. Use films. Use TV. Use guest speakers. Avoid boring these students.

12. MAKE VERY SHORT TERM ASSIGNMENTS.

Make short term assignments which are clear. Make short term assignments which are easily monitored. Make short term assignments which are easily tested, assessed. Make short term assignments which are given at the beginning of each class period, never shouted as students head for the door. Make short term assignments which convene and dismiss each class, thus defining the class time's space. Make short term assignments for which students are held accountable. Make short term assignments which provide students with immediate gratification when they are completed on time and well. Make short term assignments which allow you the give frequent complements. Get the idea? Make short term assignments. Use "a" to "d" and avoid the others until students ar really ready for longer term assignments.

a. In ten minutes...
b. In twenty minutes...
c. By the end of the hour...
d. For tomorrow...
e. For next week...(rarely)
f. By the end of the semester...(never, or not until students really understanding academic time management.)

13. SET VERY SHORT TERM GOALS.

Set very short term goals so that first year students do not get overwhelmed by academic time. They need to learn how to use their time and it is up to you to teach that concept through the use of goals. This is true of assignments and it is true of goals too. The assignments are on your terms, the goals on theirs.

a. What do you want to learn during this hour?.
b. What do you want to learn by tomorrow?
c. What do you want to learn by the end of the week.
d. What do you want to learn by the end of this Unit?
e. What do you want to learn by the end of the semester?
d. What do you want to learn to get a good job?
f. What do you need to learn to have a fulfilled life?

Here, I ask students one other question, which is,"What are you doing now to have what you say that you want."

14. INCLUDE EVERYONE IN CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS.

Include everyone in classroom discussions so that your students will begin to feel that they belong to your group and so that their ideas, feelings, and values are valuable, respectable. The comfort level of first year students in your classroom correlates mightily with his willingness to complete the course.

14. INCLUDE EVERYONE IN CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS. Cont.

Feeling safe is a major problem for first year students since so many of these students have found that school has too often been a place where they were not safe, respected, valued, honored, or celebrated. Use ideas that students bring up as a part of the instruction, when appropriate. Encourage divergent thinking by pointing it out and complementing it. Ideally, each student will get to recite during every class period. For this ideal to obtain requires a highly vigilant teacher. Avoid the trap of allowing just two or three highly verbal students to monopolize the idea field of "feeding back."

15. MAKE A SCRAPBOOK ABOUT SUCCESSFUL ROLE MODELS.

Make a scrapbook featuring diverse role models so that the students can build an ongoing tower of models that they can learn from and plan to emulate as they progress through you course and their course work. This technique is very easy to use and the students get excited about the persons that they want included in their scrapbook. Sports figures might be their first choices but their tastes will broaden as other kinds of "models" are introduced and as their sophistication grows. The excitement that this one technique generates each semester might force the purchase of another scrapbook. This represents an inexpensive means to "consciousness raising." Use of this technique provides students fresh ways of thinking and rethinking their choices of the kinds of lives that they might want to lead. This technique "pushes back horizons" for your charges in that it opens new areas of possible achievement that most will not have ever known about and therefore, never have considered. This is another one of the techniques that works. Try it. They will like it. Another unexpected consequence of the use of this technique happens to be the fun that is added to you program by the energy and interest that this one simple idea generates in the classroom setting. Sometimes, this technique takes on the feel of a competition if it is assigned as a collaborative learning or small group activity. Students find it exhilarating. I think that most classes can stand more of that.

16. BE FAIR, FIRM, DEMANDING, CONSISTENT AND PREDICTABLE.

Be fair, firm, demanding, consistent and predictable when working with first year students. They need a place were there is fairness as a given in their lives. Much of what "kids" have experienced is not fair and has not been fair and looks as if it is not going to be fair. Establish fairness for them. Be firm with these students. Since many of their experiences have been in households where there are few rules which are adhered to, your firmness keeps them from having to test the limits for their behavior and, I believe, their thinking as well. Be demanding of

them. Insist on work being done and being done well, on time, and neatly. In so doing, your message to them is that you think that they can achieve. We know that the most highly correlated factor affecting student performance is teacher opinion of student ability. When the teacher believes that the students can do well, they do well. Send the positive "you can do it" message. Be consistent in your style of handling students and their needs. Do not make your students have when you will appear for class nor when you will dismiss your class. Keep materials in their places, thus avoiding scavenger hunts when materials are needed. Be predictable. Treat behavior and the expression of ideas in ways that the students can quickly become comfortable with and learn to relax with as they learn in your class. Tolerate no inappropriate behavior or language, none. By the way, none of these points exclude humor or laughter. Sarcasm is not humor to the "sarcasee." Avoid it when working with "at risk" students.

17. PROVIDE ALL MATERIALS FROM THE BEGINNING.

Provide all materials from the beginning of the semester. The students will feel better if they come with everything that they need and so will you. Some money might have to be spent on this item, but it is worth the price. You can always include this item on your tax forms. Use institution moneys when you can. Many times there are funds available. Use them.

18. BE ANIMATED IN YOUR INSTRUCTION.

Be animated in your instruction. Move around the room. Use other voice tones than your "school teacher" tone. If you need to watch some performers, do so. Use some of their techniques in your classroom. Avoid being and looking boring. You are competing with a visually oriented student body, so use all of the energy that you can here. Energy is central to your being the center of their focus. Get their attention and keep it by being animated in your instruction.

19. TEACH A MEMORY SKILL.

Teach a memory skill to your students during the first or second day's class meeting period. I use the "rhymed number" skill first. It is easy to learn and it works for the students right away. The "chaining" skill may also be used as well. Pick one and teach it. Students will love having at their command a real learning tool that they can see the value of and use instantly. Become familiar with these techniques. There are lots of memory techniques to be found in many of the new and not so new "pop" memory books which are carried in most bookstores. Find one and share these skills with your students.

21. **FOR THE TEACHERS TO DO: ADDENDUM**
(THE IN-CLASS LIBRARY)

Should we really be serious about making Laney **STUDENT SERVING**, we would also insure that every teacher is a teacher of reading. After all, reading is one transferable skill that students need to succeed. How would we turn every teacher into a reading teacher? It is easy. Train our teachers in basic reading instruction techniques. There are people in place here who are authorities on that subject. Use them! And after the workshops in reading instruction, we make every classroom a library. How, you say? Well, for one thing, put a bookcase in every room and on the shelves of those bookcases place books that are, for the taking, free to students. Where will the books come from? Each one of us has gobs of books at home which are being dusted and not read after their first, maybe second reading. Place those on these shelves. Go to garage sales during the last hour of those events. Offer to buy all of the books that remain from the sellers and you will find that you can get some real bargains in this way. I have filled the trunk of my car for as little as $5.00. After all, the reason for the garage sale is to get rid of stuff. This includes books. I will tell you a secret. The students who have access to these books will take them and they will also read them. They will share them with their family and friends too. So the books do not come back. Who cares? The students will be reading and that is what counts in the "reading improvement game." So the subject matter may be

fiction! Who cares? Remember, reading is a **TRANSFERABLE SKILL**. It matters not one whit what a student improves his reading via. What is important here is that the reading skill be gained and this is a technique that works. Try it. You will find that it works for you too. What about the costs to you? Keep records of where you bought the books and right these costs off your taxes. I have been doing that for years and no auditor has balked at that deduction.

TEACH TEACHERS TO TEACH BETTER

Another part of this proposal and program for student success for first year students includes preparing all teachers to do their jobs more effectively, better. In this regard, I would present to all teachers a workshop on educational devices and techniques of pedagogy which are known to work with "at risk" and therefore, with students period. Yes, this means that teachers would have to be prepared for this by attending workshops before our little student success model can be put in place and activated.

What are some of this devices? Well one of the most useful is the use of VISUALIZATIONS! These are abbreviated constructs which facilitate learning on the part of students. Every subject area lends itself to these kinds of structures and should be encouraged so that teachers in various subject disciplines may develop **VISUALIZATIONS** that work for areas particular to their subject matter.

For example: In English courses where the analysis of the novel or of the short story is studied, a **VISUALIZATION** presenting the technique of story analysis would look like this.

Character

Theme Conflict

Climax

Or shortened even more:

T C C C

Here, a student is taught to name the main character, the protagonist, name the conflict that the protagonist has with the antagonist, and at the point in the story where the conflict is resolved, determine whether the protagonist is a success or a failure to determine the theme or idea or message of the piece of literature. And it works. This approach eliminates guessing completely and allows students to be able to justify an answer with evidence from the text. This visualization also gives the student a tool that is instantly usable, both easily and quickly with superior results every time.

Teachers can think of **VISUALIZATIONS** that will work for their areas as I have just said. I remember one of these which a geology teacher used so that students would remember the hardness table: Texas girls can flirt and other queer things can do (from talc to diamond). And it Worked. Try it. You too will like it.

MENTORING:* A guide for young lives

There stands a marvelous resource for Laney down here in the Preservation Park area of downtown Oakland. We need not develop a schema since that program exists. We need not reinvent the wheel, so let us use this fine resource. If you want to know about mentoring techniques, it is there for the exploring and perusing. You can also learn a lot! See the attached addendum for more details on this important aspect of my proposal. Examine it, and you will like it. More to the point, you will see the myriad ways that programs can be varied and adapted to fit your needs and serve our students.

*See MENTORING ATTACHMLENT SECTION OF THIS STUDY.
36.

EVALUATION: *How will we know that **STUDENT SEMINARS** work?*

Evaluation of programs, a too often ignored aspect of educational innovation, in this case needs to be periodical and on going. The "Director/Coordinator" must needs develop measuring sticks for this purpose. These might include traditional measures such as questionnaires, surveys, "guided interviews," "fill in the blank" type tests, "paper and pencil" tests, and, when all else fails, evaluators might ask students about their thoughts about their own success. An integral part of this idea that students should be monitored so that their and our success is tracked. Oh yes, that is work but why institute a program with only a partial commitment to its best outcome? Evaluations should ideally begin at the very earliest stages of the seminars and ensue during the whole of the semester for each student. I know! I know! More work!

FOOTNOTES BY THE NUMBER

(1). There is a model of what a student serving institution, (Read: Laney Community College.) looks like that operated right here at Laney College. It was called the **EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE**. It worked too well. I shall not bore you with those details but "old timers" around here can trace its circuitous route to its demise. One feature that it incorporated was to pay students a small stipend for each day that the student attended classes in the program. (That might have been a week.) Costs money? Yes! And if we can send a man to the moon with questionable value returned, or let us say Mars with the same, we can pay for the kind of education that we want! The issue is that that program worked to motivate students to attend and by attending they learned, even if sometimes, by accident and whether they wanted to or not or whether they had planned to have that happen or not. The learning occurred and that was the important thing about the scope and effect of that program. Students learned! Do you hear the operative word here? **LEARNED!**

The other aspect of that experimental program that worked was the "field trip"* approach to instruction and to bonding students to the program and to Laney. That also worked. Can we learn from that program? I think so. I meet students at virtually every turn who were in that little group who are success in every aspect of their lives. Isn't that what we are striving to achieve? Isn't that what we want?

The **EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE** also was an "all day" program. Yeah, now I know that I am stepping on toes here! Organizing the curriculum's schedule so that it is first convenient for students and convenient for faculty second is not a new idea however, just a tough one. OK, OK, I'll leave that right alone. Did I say that making this kind of approach work would take courage vision and real leadership skills? Well...

(2). Harvard started numerous instructional devices, techniques, programs, which grew into its "Semester Abroad" concept. You know that that is merely a giant field trip. Could Laney do better?

(3) A sample calendar is enclosed.

(4) You are asking why there is no mention of the technology of computers herein! Well, this proposal presents issues in instruction, not subject matter. After all, instruction is for all subject areas. Improve instruction and all areas win.

* See item #10 on page 27. See also the calendar of events for ideas as to where students may be taken, "field tripped." Credit for event exposure and participation are additional aspects of this concept based on learning in the "where it is at" mode.

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APPENDIX OF SUPPORT MATERIALS

1. A mentoring compendium of materials from the Mentoring Center in Preservation Park follows.

2. A prototype of a student participation card is enclosed.

3. A schedule of events calendared for student participation if mocked up and presented herein.

Laney's Spring Activity Card

Name_____

Address_____

Student ID _____ **Student Photo**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69